

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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SUBJ: UP PRESS REPORT ON STRIKES

SECSTATE FOR S/PRS

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DUE TELECOMMUNICATIONS STRIKE, UPI UNABLE FILE COPY
THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS. EMBASSY, THEREFORE, SUB-
MITTING FOLLOWING STORY AS PER REF INSTRUCTIONS:

ADDIS ABABA APRIL 30, 1974 (UPI)--

ETHIOPIA EXPERIENCED PARTIAL BREAKDOWN OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS,
ELECTRIC AND WATER SERVICES TODAY DESPITE LAST MINUTE
APPEALS BY THE PRIME MINISTER FOR WORKERS TO STAY ON THE
JOB.

THE ARMED FORCES ALSO MADE GOOD THEIR EARLIER PLEDGE TO
HALT FURTHER STRIKES AND WORK STOPPAGES BY SURROUNDING
THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS CENTRE IN THE HEART OF THE CITY
AND REFUSING TO ALLOW STAFF ON DUTY TO LEAVE THE BUILDING.
JEEP-LOADS OF TROOPS, AND SOME ARMoured CARS MOUNTED WITH
MACHINE GUNS, CONVERGED ON THE BUILDING JUST BEFORE CLOSING
TIME AND A FEW HOURS LATER TROOPS TOOK UP POSITIONS INSIDE
IN A FURTHER EFFORT TO KEEP ESSENTIAL SERVICES OPERATING
AND TO ENSURE THAT NO PROPERTY WAS SABOTAGED.
INTERNATIONAL TELEPHONE, TELEX AND CABLE SERVICES HAVE
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BEEN SUSPENDED, THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED RADIO ETHIOPIA WENT

OFF THE AIR FOR TWO HOURS BUT IT HAS SINCE RESUMED NORMAL BROADCASTING OPERATIONS.

THE CITY'S ELECTRIC AND WATER SERVICES ARE STILL FUNCTIONING BUT ALL DUTIES ARE BEING MANNED BY MANAGERIAL STAFF.

ONE ELECTRIC COMPANY WORKER SAID THE SITUATION WILL ONLY TURN SERIOUS WHEN THERE IS SOME SORT OF BREAKDOWN REQUIRING MAINTENANCE AND THEN THERE WILL BE NO ONE TO REPAIR IT.

IT IS STILL NOT KNOWN WHEN THE STRIKES WILL END AND AS ONE WESTERN DIPLOMAT SAID "THE MILITARY MIGHT BE ABLE TO KEEP SOME SERVICES OPEN AT THE POINT OF A BARREL BUT FOR HOW LONG AND AT WHAT EVENTUAL PRICE."

IN A SERIES OF MESSAGES LATE LAST NIGHT, PRIME MINISTER ENDALKACHEW MAKONNEN APPEALED TO THE WORKERS NOT TO STRIKE AND TO ALLOW HIS GOVERNMENT TO PROPOSE LEGISLATION ALLOWING GOVERNMENT WORKERS TO FORM UNIONS--THE CENTRAL DEMAND NOW BEING CONTESTED.

HE SAID "REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EMPLOYEES OF THE TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE ELECTRIC AUTHORITY HAVE BEEN GIVEN ADEQUATE REPLIES TO THEIR DEMANDS AND THEY HAVE NO REASON TO STOP WORK AND CAUSE GRAVE PROBLEMS TO THE COUNTRY AND THE PEOPLE BY INTERRUPTING PUBLIC SERVICES."

HE SAID A SPECIAL ANTI-STRIKE COMMISSION MADE UP OF MINISTERS AND SENIOR ARMY AND POLICE OFFICERS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED UNDER THE CHAIR MANSHIP OF THE INTERIOR MINISTER, ZAWDE GABRE SELASSIE RPT ZAWDE GABRE SELASSIE. AND HE WARNED THAT IT HAD BEEN GIVEN THE AUTHORITY TO FIRE ANY STRIKING CIVIL SERVANTS. BUT ONE TELECOMMUNICATIONS WORKER SAID "AS MOST GOVERNMENT AGENCIES ARE PROFIT MAKING ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN COMMERCIAL ACTIVITIES WE SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO FORM TRADE UNIONS LIKE ANYONE ELSE."

THE LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT HAS REJECTED THE CREATION OF THE SEVEN-MAN SPECIAL ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION SET UP BY EMPEROR HAILE SELASSIE TO INVESTIGATE PERSISTENT ALLEGATIONS OF MISAPPROPRIATION OF PUBLIC FUNDS BY OFFICIALS OF THE FORMER GOVERNMENT WHICH RESIGNED EN MASSE AT THE HEIGHT OF LAST FEBRUARY'S CIVILIAN AND MILITARY TURMOIL.

SEVERAL DEPUTIES ACCUSED THE GOVERNMENT OF ARBITRARILY APPOINTING THE COMMISSION WITHOUT INFORMING THE ARMED FORCES AND PARLIAMENT.

LATER IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT A FIVE-MAN SUB-COMMITTEE HAD UNCLASSIFIED

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BEEN CREATED UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF A FORMER ARMY MAJOR, ADMASSIE ZELEKE RPT ADMASSIE ZELEKE TO INVESTIGATE THE POSSIBILITIES OF FORMING A NEW COMMISSION OF INQUIRY. MEANWHILE THERE SEEMS TO BE NO END IN SIGHT OF THE STRIKE BY CITY BUS DRIVERS, NOW IN ITS 26TH DAY, PLUS THE STRIKES BY MUNICIPAL WORKERS IN ASMARA, THE NORTHERN CAPITAL OF ERITREA PROVINCE, AND RAILWAYMEN ON THE FRANCO-ETHIOPIAN LINE TO THE FRENCH RED SEA PORT OF DJIBOUTI.

ATTN: UNLESS MAJOR DEVELOPMENT THIS WILL HOLD. WILL TRY
AND FILE TOMORROW BY SAME METHOD. MAUGHAN/ADDIS
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